

REMARKS

These Remarks are filed in response to the Office Action mailed January 5, 2004. In this Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-10 and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, rejected claims 1-15 and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated, and rejected claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious.

The undersigned would like to thank Examiner Restifo for extending him the courtesy of a telephone interview to discuss this case. In light of the telephone interview held between the Examiner and the undersigned, and in light of the claim amendments above, Applicant believes that the present rejections should be withdrawn. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests reconsideration of the current application.

During the telephone interview with the Examiner, the Examiner requested a drawing amendment to indicate the claimed longitudinal centers of the skags and the carbide strips. Figure 7 has been amended as described above. In particular, center points C and C' have been added to Figure 7 to show the inherent longitudinal centers C and C' of the carbide strips 42 and the skags 34, respectively, which shows how the skag center C' is positioned relatively rearward. In addition, the second full paragraph on page 8 of the specification has been amended to add references to these longitudinal centers C and C' in Figure 7 and to note how, with these reference points included, Figure 7 displays a 60/40 skag/carbide trailing relationship. As this 60/40 skag/carbide trailing relationship in Figure 7 matches the 60/40 skag/bottom running surface trailing relationship discussed on pages 7-8 of the specification, it is clear that the carbide 42 is positioned 50/50 with respect to the bottom running surface centerpoint C (see specification pg. 8) and shares the same centerpoint C. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

In rejecting claims 1-10 and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §112 in the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the "surfaces facing the skag . . ." in claims 1 and 19 is unclear. As noted in the Amendments above, this phrase has been deleted from claims 1 and 19. Applicant therefore submits that the rejection under §112 has been traversed.

The Examiner also rejected all the claims under §102 or §103 in light of Lachance (U.S. 6,520,512 B1). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. As the undersigned discussed with the Examiner, Lachance does not disclose at least "the skags being positioned such that they extend longitudinally more rearwardly of the running surface center than forwardly of the running surface center" as required by claim 1 or "the skags having a longitudinal center located

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rearwardly of the longitudinal center of the running surface” of the ski as required by claim 16. To the extent Lachance discloses the two skags of claims 1 and 16, such skags would be wings 38 of bar 36. However, such wings 38 do not extend longitudinally more rearwardly of the running surface center than forwardly of the running surface center (claim 1) and the longitudinal center of such wings 38 is not located rearwardly of the running surface center (claim 16). The longitudinal center of the bottom running surface center is generally aligned with the ski spindle pivot mount (as shown in Applicant’s Figure 4) since the contact surface of the snowmobile skis is generally centered about this point. In Lachance, as shown in Figure 3, wings 38 extend further forward (i.e., rightward) of this longitudinal center than they do behind it (i.e., leftward). Accordingly, at least this element of claims 1 and 16 is not shown by Lachance. Accordingly, the rejection under §102(e) of claim 1 and claims 2-9 which depend from claim 1 over Lachance should be withdrawn for at least this reason. Similarly, the rejection under §103 of claim 16 and claims 17-18 which depend from claim 16 over Lachance should be withdrawn for at least this reason.

Lachance also does not disclose a snowmobile ski where “the distance between the upper outer edges of the skags being generally equal to distance between the right and left lower side edges of the keel,” as required by claim 11. To the extent that Lachance shows a keel, it would be lowered center channel 30 of its ski. As shown in the ski cross sections in Figures 4 and 5 of Lachance, the distance between the upper outer edges of wings 38 is much wider than distance between the right and left lower side edges of lowered center channel 30. Lachance does not disclose or even suggest the general alignment of these edges as provided by claim 11 that provides a deep keel design. Accordingly, the rejection under §102(e) of claim 11 and claims 12-15 which depend from claim 11 over Lachance should be withdrawn for at least this reason.

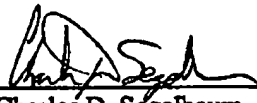
Finally, Lachance does not disclose a kit for converting a single skag ski into a dual skag ski when the single skag is removed from the single skag ski, where the channel between the resulting dual skags remains generally free of surfaces that extend downwardly laterally toward the skag inside surfaces, whereby the channel is generally free of undercutting surfaces that potentially trap debris against the skag inside surfaces, as required by claim 19. In contrast, Lachance the area between wings 38 includes a carbide bar X as shown in Figure 4 that has undercutting surfaces on each of its upper right and left sides that extend downwardly laterally toward its respective (closest) wing inside surface and could potentially trap debris.

Accordingly, the rejection under §102(e) of claim 19 and claims 20-22 which depend from claim 19 over Lachance should be withdrawn for at least this reason.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 5, 2004

  
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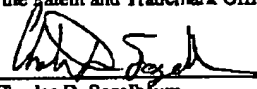
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